

Inspection of EEF Limited

Inspection dates: 24 to 27 October 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Apprenticeships **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Information about this provider

EEF Limited (EEF), also known as Make UK Limited, is an independent learning provider based in Birmingham, West Midlands. EEF specialises in training for the manufacturing and engineering sectors. At the time of the inspection, there were 879 apprentices in learning. Around 622 of these apprentices were studying the level 3 engineering technician apprenticeship standard. Most of the remaining apprentices study a range of engineering apprenticeships at levels 2 to 6. There were 39 apprentices studying leadership and management apprenticeships at levels 3 or 5. Around 113 apprentices were under the age of 18.

EEF works with one subcontractor, North West Training Council. This subcontractor provides the technical training for 78 level 3 engineering technician apprentices, who are based at a car manufacturer in Liverpool.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Most apprentices enjoy their apprenticeship. Most have high attendance and quickly learn the importance of being punctual in an engineering environment. Leaders set high expectations by beginning apprentices' learning at 8am and use a clocking-in system. Apprentices develop appropriate workplace behaviours in preparation for working in engineering.

Apprentices are respectful of their peers, tutors and workplace colleagues. This is because leaders have reviewed their approach to behaviour management and set high expectations for apprentices' behaviour within the training centre. They deal with behavioural issues quickly as they arise. Leaders encourage a few apprentices to become positive role models. They help them to become ambassadors so that local school children can aspire to a career in engineering.

Apprentices learn how to become professional engineers, leaders or managers. Tutors carry out an assessment of apprentices' current skills and behaviours at the start of the apprenticeship to identify areas in which they need further support, such as teamworking or communication. Staff carry out reviews at the end of each block of training which assess the behaviours apprentices have developed and any areas where they could further improve. This helps apprentices to develop their workplace behaviours in a supportive environment.

Apprentices feel safe in the training centre and at work. They are aware of the new QR code system which allows them to report concerns immediately and anonymously. Apprentices feel comfortable speaking to staff, they say that staff are supportive, and they are confident that staff will deal with concerns appropriately. Most apprentices are aware of local threats such as knife crime. However, apprentices based in Liverpool are less sure about the dangers they may face in their local area.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders' effective action has led to a modernised offer for apprentices. They have, for example, redesigned their level 3 engineering technician apprenticeship to improve apprentices' and employers' experiences. They now include a consolidation week at regular intervals throughout the first year. New apprentices spend these weeks in their employer's premises to carry out tasks related to their learning in the centre. This is designed to ease transition into the workplace and to help apprentices to develop their skills quickly. These apprentices are having a positive learning experience.

Most tutors plan their curriculums logically so that apprentices build their knowledge, skills and behaviours gradually throughout their apprenticeship. For example, level 5 operations or departmental manager tutors teach self and social awareness before they teach apprentices about changing behaviours in others. This

helps apprentices to build relationships through negotiation while managing conflict and stress. However, on a few occasions, level 2 engineering operative tutors do not always plan learning to build on existing knowledge. For example, apprentices complete worksheets to plan the tools and equipment they will need for a practical exercise, after the exercise has been completed.

Tutors are highly qualified in the engineering or management sectors. They bring credibility to their teaching. They have significant industry experience and use their knowledge effectively to provide relevant useful examples in their teaching.

Leaders provide high-specification industry standard tools and equipment at the Make UK training centre for apprentices to use to develop their skills. This equipment matches the types of machinery that apprentices use in the workplace. Employers value the investment leaders have made to ensure that skills are current.

Leaders have provided training to tutors to improve the standard of feedback that they provide to apprentices. Most tutors provide constructive feedback that tells apprentices what they have done well and how to improve their work. Apprentices value this feedback and most take pride in their work. Level 3 engineering technician apprentices at the subcontractor, understand the importance of summarising their research and avoiding plagiarism in written assignments. Most apprentices produce at least the expected standard of work for their level of learning.

Most staff, including those based at the subcontractor, carry out regular effective reviews of apprentices' progress. They communicate with apprentices and their line managers to receive and provide feedback that helps apprentices to make progress on their apprenticeship. However, in a few cases, employers are not included in these discussions. This means that valuable opportunities to rectify concerns or provide additional support to apprentices are missed.

Most apprentices gain substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours as a result of the training they receive. For example, level 3 engineering technician apprentices learn crane slinging and how to use equipment such as grinders and guillotines. Level 3 utilities engineering technician apprentices learn how to diagnose and fix faults on machinery using a voltage indicating device. Employers value highly the skills that their apprentices gain.

Leaders have significantly enhanced the personal development curriculum for apprentices. They now include in-depth training on topics such as healthy relationships, drug and alcohol awareness and building resilience. Leaders have also noted an increase in apprentices who are struggling financially. They have invited a high street bank to talk to apprentices about budgeting and managing finances. Apprentices who began their apprenticeship in September 2023 have a much better understanding of these topics than apprentices in years 2, 3 and 4. Leaders have rolled out some of this training to apprentices who began their apprenticeship before September 2023, but they acknowledge that there is still further work to do to improve all apprentices' understanding of these topics.

Most apprentices receive useful information about their potential next steps throughout their apprenticeship. Tutors discuss the different types of career opportunities within the engineering sector and explain the differences between desk-based roles such as product design, and workshop-based roles such as machining. This helps apprentices to make informed choices.

Leaders accurately identify the strengths and weaknesses of their provision. They take effective action to improve the weaknesses. For example, the recent redesign of the personal development curriculum and a new progress monitoring system, so that they have an accurate oversight of apprentices' progress. Most of their improvements are having a positive impact on the quality of education that apprentices receive.

Leaders continue to experience challenges with the recruitment and retention of staff. To reduce vacant posts, leaders work cohesively with specialist recruitment agencies, local universities, and other training organisations to identify improved recruitment solutions. Leaders closely monitor staffs' teaching hours and caseloads of apprentices. New staff are supported with teaching mentors. These initiatives have reduced disruption to learning.

Governors have suitable knowledge and experience to undertake their roles. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Leaders provide governors with detailed high-quality reports. Governors use this information effectively to provide scrutiny and challenge for leaders to continue to improve the quality of education that apprentices receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Roll out the new personal development curriculum to all apprentices who began their apprenticeship before September 2023.
- Improve the curriculum design, planning and teaching on the level 2 engineering operative apprenticeship.
- Ensure more employers attend the reviews of their apprentices' progress.

Provider details

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| Unique reference number | 51693 |
| Address | Aston Technology Hub Nobel Way Birmingham B6 7EU |
| Contact number | 01213447900 |
| Website | www.makeuk.org |
| Principal, CEO or equivalent | Mark Farrant |
| Provider type | Independent Learning Provider |
| Date of previous inspection | 17 to 20 May 2016 |
| Main subcontractors | North West Training Council |

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of external delivery, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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| Ruth Stammers, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
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